




**MindLeaps**

FISCAL
YEAR
ANNUAL
REPORT

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MISSION

We help vulnerable youth develop their life skills through a specific dance pedagogy. Then, we equip them with the vocational skills to leap forward in life. Hence, MindLeaps!

DIRECTOR'S NOTE



Dear Friends,

This year, MindLeaps served more children than ever before by working with partners in Uganda and Mauritania while continuing our programming in Rwanda, Guinea and Bosnia-Herzegovina. **Our programs benefitted over 600 children in five countries.**

In West Africa, MindLeaps opened a **permanent center in the capital city of Conakry.** This center enables us to provide our dance and English classes in a stable, safe space for many years to come. We have also hired several new local staff members to meet the needs of our growing number of students.

Our Rwanda program reached a milestone: **sending 55 kids to school in January, the most in our organization's history.** Reintegration into school is the final step in the MindLeaps' transformational program and sets street children on a path out of poverty.

MindLeaps organizational growth has continued with a 30% increase in our operational budget. We also **partnered once again this year with Segal Family Foundation, the US Department of State, David Williamson Rwanda Foundation, GlobalGiving, and Broadway Cares** and formed new partnerships with international organizations, including **HIAS and SOS Pairs Educateurs.**

As always, our heartfelt thanks goes out to our many friends, supporters, staff, volunteers, foundation partners, and corporate donors who help us each and every day to achieve our mission.

Sincerely,

Rebecca Davis
Executive Director

2017 HIGHLIGHTS



Ruben's Shoes, MindLeaps, and the Ministry of Social Affairs in Guinea distribute 13,000 pairs of shoes across Guinea.

January



55 program graduates are reintegrated into formal education in Rwanda.

MindLeaps partners with HIAS to provide a one-month program in Uganda for 75 urban refugee children.



March/
April



CNN International airs a 30-minute feature about MindLeaps Rwanda.

MindLeaps partners with SOS Pairs Educateurs in Mauritania to run a 3-month program for 117 street children and juvenile offenders.



July



Les Ballets Trockadero de Monte Carlo dancers join the International Artists Fund and carry out a Train The Trainers program in Rwanda.

August



IMPACT 2017: BY THE NUMBERS

634 Students Served

2002 Hours of dance instruction

936 Hours of academic classes

400 Hours of IT training

20,450 Meals served

20 Local staff employed

41,000 Data points collected

5 Countries served

RESEARCH

From 2014-2016, Oxford University Professor Patrick McSharry and Drexel University's Dr. Janelle Junkin collaborated with MindLeaps to research the impact of MindLeaps' program on at-risk youth. The paper on these findings analyzes two years of data collection to explain the impact on cognitive

development and social-emotional learning of out-of-school youth through MindLeaps' dance-based methodology. The paper was completed in July 2017 and is in submission for publication.

In summer 2017, Public health specialist Kimberly Kamara worked with our Guinea program to assist with student assessment and development in Guinea. Kamara received her MPH from **Mt. Sinai** and has more than 10 years of experience working in the international development sector. She has worked at the END Fund, Population Services International, The Carter Center, USAID, and the National Democratic Institute.

Assisted in the field by medical student Julia Sawatzky, Kamara met with officials to understand the education system in Guinea and its gaps in child preparedness for academic success. In addition, they tested and adapted MindLeaps' intake questionnaire - developed to capture the circumstances and stories of kids who come into the Guinean MindLeaps program - for improved effectiveness in a Guinean context.

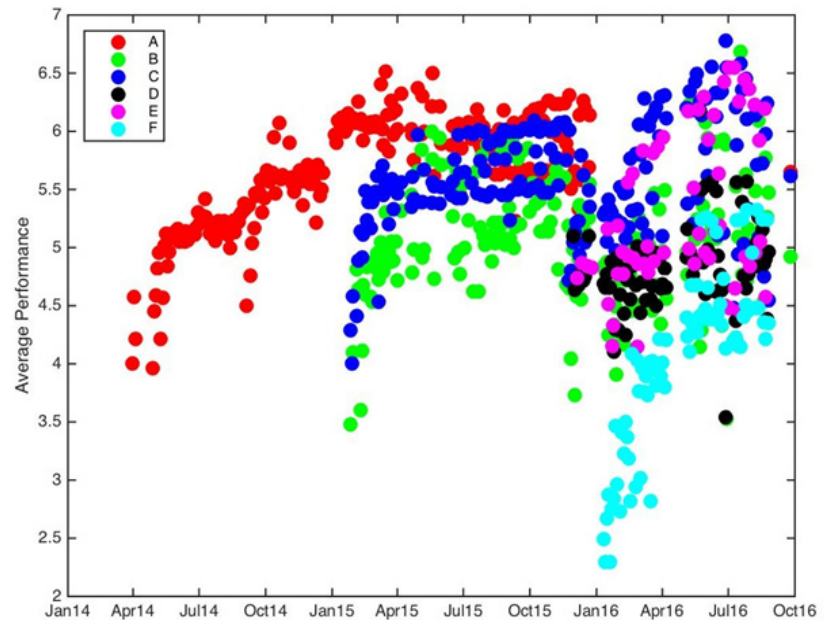


Figure 1: Average performance per group by days in program. Six classes (groups A - F) were studied.

CASE STUDY: THE STORY OF JOSEPH

We write so much about the work we do with vulnerable youth in Rwanda, but sometimes it's hard to encapsulate what life is actually like for the children we serve. Often these stories are best told in the words of a child who has walked down that path. We wanted to take a moment to share one such story about Joseph, one of our students in Rwanda...

The following is written in his own words (translated from Kinyarwanda):

What was your life like before coming to MindLeaps?

I never imagined that I could learn or go back to school. I didn't think about my future in a positive way.

To think about having a future like being a doctor or any other profession wasn't even on my mind.

I have 8 siblings. Most of them are older. I stay with my mom who works at home. Me and my older brother, Simon (who also attends the MindLeaps program), help my mom get money to eat. My dad died in 2004 when I was one year old. He used to work at an electro-gas company. Life has been hard since he died.

Why did you go to the streets?

My brother Simon went to the streets first, not too long after my father died. I went to find him one day when I was 10 and I just decided to stay there. I was on the streets for one year. I spent my time begging – asking people for money as they got off the buses. When I got a few coins I was able to go to a restaurant and eat the left-over food that people left on their plates. I slept in the drain under the street. When the rain came, I used to search for small shops that would let me sleep under their awnings.



What did you think about?

I used to think about going back to school. I had dropped out-of-school after third grade because we didn't have enough money to pay school fees. School is free in Rwanda, but there are still some fees - uniforms and supplies - that we could not afford.

Begging is seen badly here, and, when people passed me on the street, they used to yell at me and tell me to go home. They didn't know what my home life was like. It made me angry.

What has been your experience at MindLeaps?

When I came to MindLeaps, I realized that my life didn't have to stay the way it was. They taught me the importance of going home even though they knew this wouldn't be easy. To this day we are struggling. Getting enough food is a problem and my mom is often sick. But I realized what MindLeaps was telling me is true. It's better to be home than on the streets.



Joseph in dance class

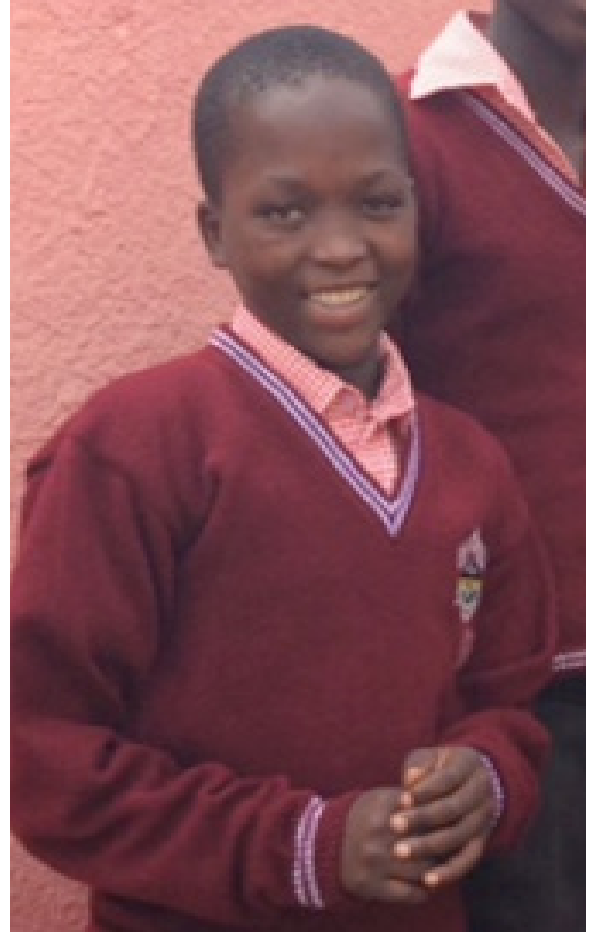
“ *I don't have to be alone anymore.* ”

Dance helped me so much as well as English. It helped me to rest my mind. When I was on the streets I was always exhausted, tired from thinking of many problems. Dance gave me a space to rest. English also helped me learn how to read and write. I didn't know how to do that before.

What do you want to do after MindLeaps?

I want to go back to school because I know that a person who doesn't learn doesn't have anything in this life. I want to be a doctor. They help sick people. They've helped me when I was sick too. After I make money as a doctor, I'll build a school to help kids on the streets so that they can go to school too.

Joseph's skills grew throughout his time at MindLeaps and he demonstrated that he was ready to attend school. In January 2017, Joseph, along with several other students, were enrolled at Orp Care Boarding School. His first term went very well; he received excellent scores in all his classes, with perfect scores in Mathematics, Social Studies, Science and Kinyarwanda. He is ranked 4th in his second grade class.



PUPIL'S NAME Ngirabakunzi Joseph

POSITION IN CLASS 4th OUT OF 35 PUPILS

AVERAGE MARK IN CLASS 95.8

Class Teacher's remarks Good work. Keep it up!

Joseph's Term 2 Report card from August 2017

RETURNING TO SCHOOL

On January 23, MindLeaps Rwanda enrolled 55 former street children into school - the greatest number MindLeaps has ever enrolled in a single year. Before MindLeaps, these students dropped out-of-school because of extreme poverty; they were forced onto the streets to beg for and steal food just to survive. Many had not been in school for years before finding MindLeaps.

After one year in the MindLeaps program, these children made significant progress on 7 cognitive and behavioral skills, from memorization and language, to discipline and teamwork. MindLeaps was able to determine from [TRACKER](#), its M&E system, that these youth were ready to be reintegrated into school.



In March 2017, MindLeaps received the students' report cards following the completion of the first term. The reintegrated youth demonstrated success in the classroom, with **over half ranking in the top 10 positions in their class.**





The boarding school students - with their mattresses, school supplies, new clothes and shoes in tow - headed onto buses towards their new homes. When Moussa set foot in his dormitory, he captured the moment saying: "This is the first time that I have ever slept on a mattress."

The MindLeaps Center is open to all its students – past and current – providing a safe space where they can spend their free time, work on homework, wash their clothes and eat a meal -, usually their only meal of the day. Local volunteers join our staff to mentor these program alumni and continue to help us meet the needs of our growing numbers.



NEW MARKET PARTNERSHIP: UGANDA

In 2017, MindLeaps expanded to Uganda to help urban refugee children. HIAS, one of the largest migration and refugee resettlement organizations in the world, teamed up with MindLeaps to improve the life skills of **75 refugee children** coming from 7 different countries.



A team of four MindLeaps staff traveled to Uganda to implement the program, which consisted of 8 hours of training each day: **3 two-hour dance**

classes for students, followed by a two-hour training for 10 HIAS staff. The program served refugee children from **Burundi, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Eritrea, Rwanda, Somalia, South Sudan and Sudan.**

MindLeaps' Partner in Uganda: HIAS



HIAS works around the world to protect refugees who have been forced to flee their homelands because of who they are, including ethnic, religious, and sexual minorities. For more than 130 years, HIAS has been helping refugees rebuild their lives in safety and dignity. www.HIAS.org



Child refugee and MindLeaps student, Dana* ...

Dana is a 14 year-old from the Democratic Republic of Congo and living in Kevina, Kampala. She does not go to school.

She joined the MindLeaps program and worked hard each day. During the second week, the MindLeaps teachers were busy changing music at one point during class. When they turned around, Dana was leading her peers in the warm up and counting out loud since there was no music. Everyone was following along.

When she got stuck on remembering the next movement, her peers from DRC and Sudan joined her in leading at the front of the class.

On the last day of the program, the HIAS staff asked the parents watching the performance if they would like to make any comments. Dana's mother stood up, took the microphone and said,

“ I have never seen my daughter smiling so much. She is so confident. God bless this program.”

**Fictitious name to protect the child's identity*

NEW MARKET PARTNERSHIP: MAURITANIA



MindLeaps' three-month program in Mauritania ran from February to May. MindLeaps partnered with local NGO SOS Pairs Educateurs, which serves youth and vulnerable people in El Mina, the poorest of the nine sectors of Nouakchott. **The joint program provided three months of dance classes for 117 youth at the SOS Pairs Educateurs Centre and at Nouakchott's Juvenile Detention Centre.** MindLeaps staff also provided training in the MindLeaps' methodology for 10 local Mauritanian teachers to continue the program.

MindLeaps' Partner in Mauritania: SOS Pairs Educateurs



Created in 1999 in Nouakchott, SOS Pairs Educateurs is an organization promoting the capacity of youth and youth-focused structures committed to the promotion of human rights, good governance, and the prevention of HIV/AIDS. www.sospair.org

The participating students received dance classes taught by Bashir Karenzi and Evelyne Mukashyaka from MindLeaps Rwanda and Salifou Camara from MindLeaps Guinea. After several months of classes and rehearsals, the students presented a final performance and demonstration to the local community. You can view a video of the program and performance [online here](#).



“ The MindLeaps’ program fits well with our organization since we focus on children and especially on their personal development. The program helps our students develop skills in discipline and perseverance, which will enable them to face the obstacles that will come their way. This is what children need in their education.”

-Sy Djibril, Director of SOS Pairs Educateurs

MindLeaps Center in Nyamirambo, Kigali

MindLeaps' Rwandan staff worked with 65 street children daily in order to provide a "catch up" program for street youth and out-of-school youth who have never had the chance to go to school and become literate. The program consisted of:

- Dance training to reform behavioral patterns and increase cognition.
- IT classes to introduce children to technology and the outside world.
- Boarding school sponsorship to fully re-integrate children back into civil society.
- HIV testing & treatment & hygiene/sanitation services.

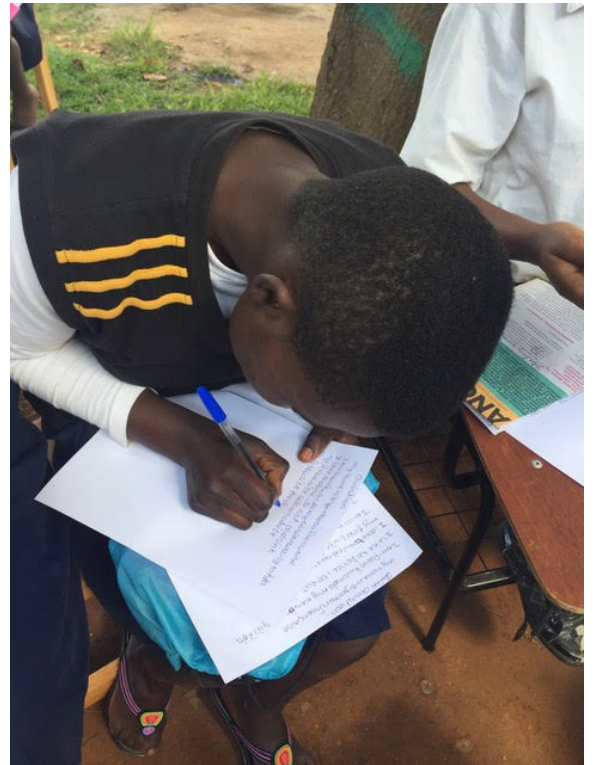
In addition, new programs were added this year:

Academic Acceleration Program

Thirty new street girls joined MindLeaps in February. In addition to all of the above, these girls are receiving the new Academic Acceleration program to help them catch up to the appropriate school level and be ready to enter formal education. This Acceleration Program is led by teachers from the local White Dove Girls' School and provides the students with English, Kinyarwanda, Math, Science, and Social Studies courses.

Sexual Health and Reproductive Classes

MindLeaps students received a series of workshops on sexual and reproductive health taught by Abdallah Nshimyumuremyi, the health teacher from MindLeaps' annual Rugerero program. Over several weeks, 46 students received a combined 52 hours of classroom instruction in subject areas, such as adolescent development and reproductive biology.



Rugerero

MindLeaps' annual program in Rugerero, Rwanda, took place once again in November 2016. Since 2009, MindLeaps has provided this program annually to 150 rural children with dance classes and health workshops over several weeks.



Remembering Jim Bell

Level 8 Projects, a charity based in Carnoustie, Scotland, has been supporting the MindLeaps Center in Kigali for several years with various capital and renovation projects. Founder of Level 8, Jim Bell was a teacher of Religious and Moral Education at Carnoustie High School. He frequently involved his pupils in fundraising to support a wide range of projects in Uganda, Columbia, the Philippines, Brazil, Romania and Rwanda. Jim Bell passed away this year and, to honor his memory, MindLeaps dedicated its Center in Kigali to become: "[MindLeaps: The Jim Bell Centre](#)".

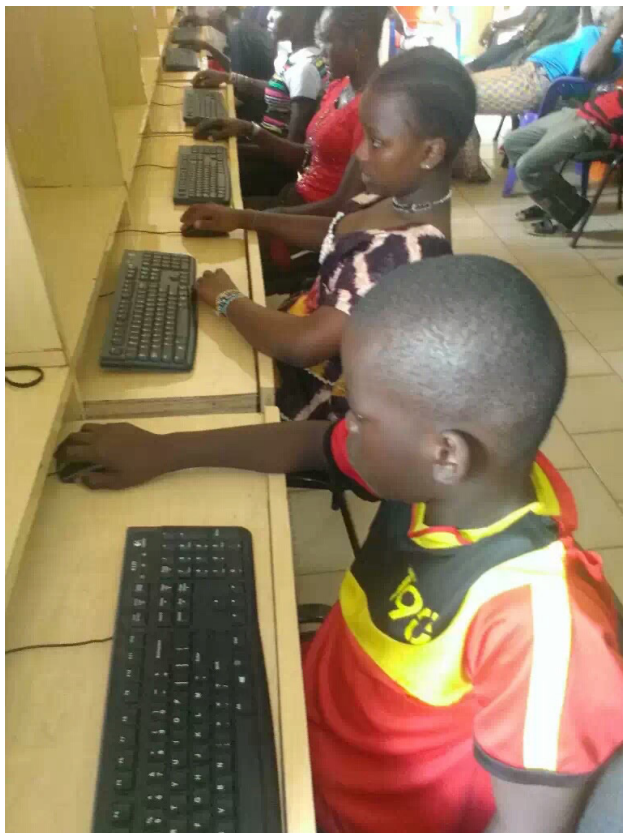


GUINEA

New Permanent Center Opens

In June 2017, MindLeaps opened its first permanent center in the capital city of Conakry. The new center has been established to provide dance and English classes in the same safe space for years to come.

This year's program launched in Conakry with 22 students and is now up to 44 youth. The top teachers from MindLeaps' Kindia program, dance teacher Salifou Camara and English teacher Amadou Doumboya, joined a team of eight Guineans to lead the Conakry program.



Guinea Edugrade

In Fall 2016, MindLeaps partnered with local NGO Guinea Edugrade to provide a STEAM program for 44 youth. The group of students received daily IT and English classes, participated in MindLeaps dance program, and received nutritional support. MindLeaps Guinea's Country Director, Ansoumane Conde, also visited the families of the children weekly to update them on the activities and receive community feedback.

"Since the day I was born, I have never touched a computer. I am really in a hurry to study and learn in these IT classes."

- Aissatou Tounkara, student

Ruben's Shoes Project

MindLeaps partnered with Canadian NGO Ruben's Shoes to transport and distribute over 13,000 pairs of donated shoes to Guinea, West Africa. The container shipped from Vancouver, Canada, on September 26, 2016 and arrived in Conakry on November 14, 2016.

In collaboration with the Ministry of Social Affairs, MindLeaps led the distribution of the shoes to local schools and orphanages across the country. The distribution started at the "Siège de l'enfance" Center in Conakry before heading to the city's Center for Underprivileged Children. Over six months, the shoes were distributed at 26 different orphanages and schools to thousands of youth and families across the country.



BOSNIA- HERZEGOVINA



Continuing its annual presence in Bosnia-Herzegovina, MindLeaps ran a summer camp for youth in August. The "Summer Camp of Friendship" brought together 80 children between the ages of 8 and 13 for two weeks in Mostar. The program focused on communication, shared experiences and social-emotional learning for children of all different backgrounds.

Spearheaded by MindLeaps' Country Director, Tanja Raic Tarcuki, the camp was based at EMAUS, an educational meeting center. The space was given to MindLeaps by Caritas and Spes, contributing partners to the camp. MindLeaps' staff led a series of creative activities with dance to engage the youth and build trust among the participants, and the program partners delivered educational workshops on communication skills and non-violent conflict resolution.

TRAIN THE TRAINERS

Throughout the year, prestigious dancers from around the world assisted MindLeaps, learning the curriculum and methodology and training students and teachers in the field.

2017 Dancers:

Caitlyn Casson (*right*), Ariel Rivka Dance

Briana Giordano, Hofstra University

Cassidy Giordano, University of the Arts

Chase Johnsey, Les Ballets Trockadero de Monte Carlo

Carlos Renedo Soler, Les Ballets Trockadero de Monte Carlo



With the expansion to new geographic locations, MindLeaps staff in Rwanda and Guinea have now actively trained fellow African staff in Uganda and Mauritania in MindLeaps' dance technique and methodology.



Above: MindLeaps Guinea teacher Salifou Camara and MindLeaps Rwanda teachers Evelyne Mukashyaka and Bashir Karenzi training new teachers in Mauritania

TRAIN THE TRAINERS

While in the field, the teachers:

» Trained local staff in the curriculum as well as in contemporary and ballet techniques



» Taught classes to students & followed MindLeaps M&E system to measure changes in cognitive development and social-emotional learning through dance



» Visited students' homes to learn more about their challenging living situations



"The first thing that caught my attention was obviously the size of what they call their home... a tiny bench, a mattress on the floor and a couple cooking pots against the corner. That is it... It certainly is a very humbling experience to get to see where and in what conditions these loving people live in." - Carlos Renedo

PERFORMANCES

MindLeaps students returned once again this year to perform in the Ubumuntu Arts Festival.

This annual festival was created by Hope Azeda, who is the founder and Artistic Director of Mashirika Creative and Performing Arts Group. The festival aims to promote peace building and healing from violence, to give a platform for the arts as an appreciated discipline in its own merit, and provide space for artists to network, grow, share, and create.

MindLeaps Rwanda teacher Ssali Eugene and American dancer Caitlyn Casson worked with several students to choreograph and stage a new work that was performed at the festival. The piece, called "Torn Together", was performed on the first night of the festival in front of an audience of thousands. In addition, Caitlyn provided dance instruction and cross-cultural engagements as part of the Ubumuntu Arts Festival by hosting contemporary dance workshops. View a video of the rehearsals and performance online at https://youtu.be/tHxCrm_vhUA.



This program was supported by the US Embassy in Rwanda.

“ These children have come so far. When you see them on stage, you cannot imagine that they do not go to school or have a safe place to sleep at night. On stage, they are free – and they are artists – not street children.” - Caitlyn Casson

LEADERSHIP & BOARD

Founder & Executive Director, Rebecca Davis

Rebecca Davis leveraged her background in ballet, business and international relations to found MindLeaps. Originally from Vancouver, British Columbia, Rebecca has choreographed and taught in Russia, Ukraine, Rwanda, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia, Scotland, Guinea and the United States. She was classically trained in the Russian Vaganova method of ballet while studying in Moscow, Saint Petersburg and Krasnoyarsk, Russia. She received a degree in choreography from The Saint Petersburg Conservatory and is a two-time Fulbright scholar. She attended York University's Schulich School of Business and Temple University's Fox School of Business (graduating summa cum laude) and holds a Master's in International Relations with a concentration in Peacekeeping Studies (American Military University). She is the recipient of the Loran Scholarship, a two-time Leeway Arts & Social Change grantee, a Carl Wilkens Fellow of The Genocide Intervention Network, and the 2015 Fulbright Alumnae in Residence in New York. She has been a guest speaker at Temple University, University of Pennsylvania African Studies Center, the Annual Fulbright Alumni Conference, Princeton University, Marywood University, University of Michigan, Brown University and gave a TEDx talk at the US Chamber of Commerce in Washington, DC.



MindLeaps Board of Trustees & Advisors provides essential guidance, strategic planning, and oversight. Among the Board's activities are fundraising, financial management, legal counsel, strategic planning, and monitoring & evaluation.

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Joel E. Soffin (Chair) – Jewish Helping Hands
Catherine Smith – Dance 101

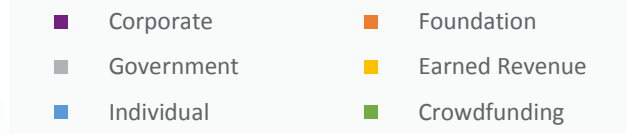
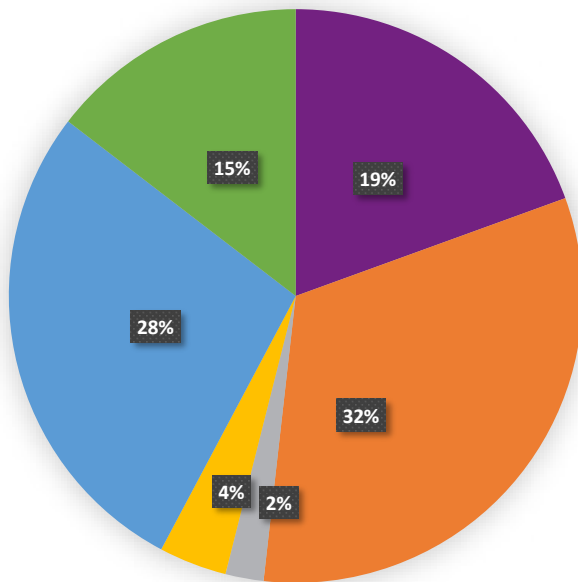
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MindLeaps' volunteers provide considerable and vital support to its operations in the U.S. and internationally. The many roles they undertake include graphic design assistance, research collection and analysis, teaching English lessons, collecting donated goods, and much more. The Board is grateful to the following for their commitment and wonderful contribution:

Stacy Acker, Bowie Alexander, Talibah Aquil, Deanna Cormier, Hichem Elbahi, Sydney Eliot, Herb Freedman, Jeannie Freeman, Nathan Gelb-Dyller, Kara Grijalva, Nia Hinkson, Ali Hoyt, Paola Ingabire, Rachel Ketterer, Talia Kurlansky, Michael LaPointe, Michael Maguire, Kenna McCoy, Matt Molina, Lauren Polansky, Hannah Rich, Laura Rowe, Julia Sawatzky, Harold Slamovitz, Christelle Smith, and Nia Williams.

FINANCIALS



Revenue	
Corporate	\$67,890
Foundation	\$112,798
Government	\$7,500
Earned Revenue	\$13,350
Individual	\$96,466
Crowdfunding	\$50,878
Total Revenue	\$348,882
Expenditures	
Programs	
Rwanda	\$166,706
Guinea	\$34,274
Bosnia-Herzegovina	\$5,591
New Market Initiatives	\$72,071
Teacher Training	\$4,105
G&A	
Salaries	\$29,700
Rent	\$15,816
Other fees and G&A expenses	\$5,843
Fundraising	
Fundraising Outreach and Activities*	\$32,566
Total Expenditures	\$366,672

Statement of Financial Position	
Sep 2016 - Aug 2017	
ASSETS	
Bank Accounts	\$31,194
Accounts Receivable	\$1,688
Total Other Current Assets	\$32,096
Fixed Assets	\$9,054
Other Assets	\$3,075
TOTAL ASSETS	\$77,106
LIABILITIES AND EQUITY	
Liabilities	
Accounts Payable	\$2,524
Accrued Compensation	\$3,000
Accrued Expenses	\$13,628
Total Liabilities	\$19,152
Equity	
Opening Balance Equity	\$13,154
Temp. Restricted Net Assets	\$25,000
Unrestricted Net Assets	\$37,590
Net Revenue	-\$17,790
Total Equity	\$57,954
TOTAL LIABILITIES AND EQUITY	\$77,106

*\$10K gift was restricted towards fundraising and awareness activities

MEDIA HIGHLIGHTS OF 2017

HUFFINGTON POST


HUFFPOST

THE BLOG 02/02/2017 11:39 am ET | Updated Feb 03, 2017

"I Never Imagined Using Dance To Reach Street Kids."

By Andy Bryant

It is my great privilege to partner with the two organizations described in the guest post by Rebecca Davis, Executive Director of [MindLeaps](#). It's laughable to think that street kids —the hasslers and hustlers that plague many people's daily commutes in Nairobi or Kigali —can show up promptly each morning during a months-long welding apprenticeship requiring discipline and persistence or that being a single link in a fluid chain of choreographed dance is the re-entry point back into the formal education system. Not so fast: [Jitegemee](#) in Kenya and MindLeaps in Rwanda are proving that 'street kid' is not a permanent, debilitating state of being, but rather a curve on life's journey to becoming healthy, productive, and empathetic young adults.



TRENDING

5 Egregious Moments From Trump's Leaked Phone Calls With World Leaders

CNN

CNN World • How dance is changing the lives of street kids in Rwanda

By Jessica Ellis for CNN
Updated 10:49 AM ET, Tue April 11, 2017

How dance is changing the lives of street kids in Rwanda



Source: CNN

The power of dance 10:57

Story highlights

(CNN) — A life on the street for a child is an everyday struggle; for food, shelter and safety.

In Rwanda, there are no recent official statistics, but it is estimated that nearly 2,000 children live on the streets of Kigali, the country's capital city.

The city has about ten groups that work with

RTG TV



ORPHELINATS
Don de 13 000 paires de chaussures

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ROSWELL DANCE THEATRE COMPANY DIRECTOR TEACHES DANCE IN UGANDA.



Posted Tuesday, April 25, 2017 4:24 pm by april@northfulton.com

COMMENT

Map 300ft

Tracy Vogt, choreographer, and dance teacher with Roswell Dance Theatre travelled recently to Africa to work with MindLeaps, a program that uses dance to help street children and refugees. The program is dedicated to helping street children and refugees find education. And it's using dance to do it.

ORGANIZATIONAL HISTORY



The present international orientation of MindLeaps is the company's second growth phase. The company was founded in 2005 as "Rebecca Davis Dance Company" with a focus on developing original, full-length contemporary ballets based on famous literary works, significant historical events and modern social issues. In 2010, it underwent a mission change to reflect today's international work serving children.

The stimulus for the mission change began in 2008 when Rebecca Davis choreographed a full-length ballet about the genocide in Darfur. The creative process of transforming Brian Steidle's book "The Devil Came on Horseback" into an aesthetic presentation was an all-consuming experience and left Rebecca wondering what happens in post-genocide countries. She traveled to Rwanda to answer her lingering questions about genocide and reconciliation. Instead of finding answers, she found hundreds of kids living on the streets that loved the same thing she had built her entire company around – dance. Since that trip, Rebecca has committed her life to getting kids off the street and educated in order to break the cycle of poverty. By 2010, she had piloted projects in Bosnia-Herzegovina, Guinea and Rwanda.

From 2011-2013, Rebecca traveled in Africa and the Balkans working with educators, dancers and psychologists to build the current dance curriculum and methodology that is used by MindLeaps. This curriculum targets learning skills that are essential for success in a formal educational environment. In 2014, the company changed its name to MindLeaps to better reflect the mission of the organization and the collective effort put forth every day to help these street children. In 2015, MindLeaps concentrated on developing a rigorous M&E system to evaluate the effectiveness of its program in collaboration with staff from Carnegie Mellon University-Rwanda and Drexel University.

The company currently serves between 250 and 700 children annually depending on the funding climate, political stability and health levels of the focus countries.

For a historical timeline of activities visit <https://www.hstry.co/timelines/mindleaps>



MindLeaps

MANY THANKS TO OUR
PHOTOGRAPHERS:

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Michael Maguire
Jano Cohen
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